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LAWS AND REGULATIONS,  
OF THE  
*American* PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY  
HELD AT *PHILADELPHIA*, FOR PROMOTING  
*USEFUL KNOWLEDGE.*

TWO societies having formerly subsisted in Philadelphia, whose views and ends were the same, viz. "*the advancement of useful knowledge*," it was judged that their union would be of public advantage; and they were accordingly united *January 2d, 1769*, by a certain *Fundamental Agreement*; the chief *Articles* of which are,  
*First*, That the name of the *United Society* shall be *The American Philosophical Society, held at Philadelphia, for promoting useful Knowledge.*

*Secondly*, That there shall be the following officers of the society, viz. one *Patron*, one *President*, three *Vice-Presidents*, one *Treasurer*, four *Secretaries*, and three *Curators*.

*Thirdly*, That all the above officers shall be chosen annually by ballot, at the first meeting of the Society in January; excepting only that instead of electing a Patron, the Governor of the Province be requested to be Patron.

Other Laws were to be made by the *United Society*; and accordingly the following LAWS, &c. were passed *February 3d, 1769*.

I. *Of the annual Payments to be made by Members.*

Every Member of this Society shall subscribe *Ten Shillings* yearly, to be applied by the Society to such purposes

ses as they shall direct; and no Member shall be intitled to a vote in the annual election of officers, unless it appears that he has paid into the hands of the Treasurer, the subscription of the preceding year, and all former arrears, if any there were.

Every Member hereafter to be chosen, agreeable to the Laws of this Society, shall pay *Ten Shillings* admission money, and also subscribe for the yearly payment of *Ten Shillings*, before he is intitled to have any vote in the business of the Society at their meetings.

## II. *Of the Election of Members.*

The election of new Members shall be by ballot, and that only on the third Friday in the months of January, April, July and October; and in order to such election at least twenty Members must be present.

Any Member may, at any meeting, propose such person or persons, as he thinks proper to be a Member or Members of this Society; but no person shall be ballotted for, unless his name, together with the name or names of the Member or Members who proposed him, has been fixed up by the Secretaries for the view of the Society, at the two meetings preceding the time of election. Nor shall any person be deemed duly chosen unless three-fourths of the votes of the whole Members be in his favour.

## III. *Of the Officers, and manner of their election.*

The election of such Officers as are to be chosen in this Society, shall be on the first Friday in January every year, by ballot or written ticket, between the hours of two and five in the afternoon, at such place in this city as shall be fixed by the Society at their previous meeting on the third Friday in December every year; of which notice shall be given in the Gazette, or such other public papers as the  
Society

Society shall order, at least one week before the day of election.

Before opening the election, the company that shall be met at half an hour after two, shall appoint three Members of the Society as judges of the election, and also two clerks or secretaries, for taking down the names of the voters. And in case of an equality of votes for any Officer, after casting up the ballots, the decision shall be by lots, to be drawn by one of the judges.

#### IV. *Of the President.*

The President is to preside at all meetings, to preserve order, to regulate the debates, and to state and put questions, agreeable to the sense and intention of the Members.

#### V. *Of the Vice-Presidents.*

In the absence of the *President*, his duty shall devolve on the *Vice-Presidents*, so that they shall preside alternately at meetings. But if the Vice-President, whose turn it is to preside at any meeting, should be absent, his place shall be supplied by any of the other Vice-Presidents, who shall be present, according as he may be next in turn. If only one Vice-President be present, he shall of course preside; and if neither the President, nor any Vice-President be present, the Members met, shall appoint one of their number to take the chair for that meeting.

#### VI. *Of the Treasurer.*

The *Treasurer* shall receive the subscriptions of the Members, and all other monies that may become due to the Society, and shall pay the same agreeable to their orders, certified to him by the President, Vice-President or Member, who was in the chair when the order was made.

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The Treasurer shall keep a regular account of all monies received and paid by him as aforesaid; and once every year, or oftener if required by the Society, he shall render an account to them of the stock in his hands, and the disbursements made by their order, and shall deliver up to his successor the books and all papers belonging to them, together with the balance of cash in his hands. And for the faithful discharge of his trust, he shall, before he enters on his office, give bond and security to the President and Vice-Presidents, in double the sum which they, or any three of them, shall judge he may probably become entrusted with during his said office.

#### VII. *Of the Secretaries.*

The *Secretaries* shall so settle matters as to take equal shares of all business, and so as that two of them shall serve at every meeting, viz. one to take the minutes, and one to read all letters and papers that may be communicated to the Society. It is also the business of the two Secretaries of each particular meeting, to copy into the minute-book the proceedings of that meeting, in order to produce the same fair to the next meeting. They are further to copy into the proper books all such letters, papers and essays, as the Society may think fit to preserve on record, and to have the same ready to be laid before the next meeting.

The other two Secretaries are, in the mean while, to give notice to new members of their election, and agreeable to the directions of the Society, to write or answer letters; and, in general, to *manage all matters of correspondence.*

The Secretaries may, for their own ease, change places; so that the two who have served as *corresponding Secretaries*, for one month or limited time, shall take their turn to serve for the like time as *sitting or attending Secretaries.*

#### VIII. *Of*

VIII. *Of the Curators.*

The business of the *Curators* shall be to take charge of, and preserve, all *Specimens of natural Productions*, whether of the *Animal, Vegetable* or *Fossil* kingdom; all models of machines and instruments, and all other matters and things belonging to the Society, which shall be committed to them; to class and arrange them in their proper order, and keep an exact list of them, with the names of the respective donors, in a book provided for that purpose; which book shall be laid before the Society, as often as called for.

The Curators, on entering upon their office, shall give such a receipt for every thing that is committed to their charge, as the Society shall think proper; and, at the end of their term, shall deliver up the same to their successors. For the faithful performance of their duty, and of the trust reposed in them, they shall give bond to the Presidents and Vice-Presidents, in such a sum as they, or any three of them, shall require.

IX. *Of the Meetings of the Society.*

The ordinary meetings of the Society shall be on the first and third Fridays of every month, from October to May, both inclusive, at six o'clock in the evening, and on the third Friday in each of the other four months at seven o'clock.

No meeting shall be continued after ten o'clock, nor any new matter be introduced by motion, or otherwise, after nine o'clock.

X. *Of the Disposition of Money, and making new Laws.*

No part of the Society's stock shall be disposed of in *Premiums*, or otherwise, nor shall any new laws be made,

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until

until the same have been proposed at one meeting, and are agreed to by two-thirds of twenty or more Members present at a subsequent meeting.

### XI. *Of other Proceedings of the Society.*

No question shall be put on a *motion*, unless the motion be *seconded*; and the determination of any question shall be by *ballot*, instead of open suffrage, if desired by any four Members. In case of an equality of votes on any question, the same shall be deferred to another meeting.

When any Member speaks he shall stand up, and address himself to the chair, and the rest shall remain silent in their seats. When two or more offer to speak at the same time, the presiding Member, in that, as in other matters of order, shall regulate and determine who shall speak first.

### XII. *Of Committees.*

The Members of this Society shall be classed into one or more of the following *Committees*.

1. Geography, Mathematics, Natural Philosophy and Astronomy.

2. Medicine and Anatomy.

3. Natural History and Chemistry.

4. Trade and Commerce.

5. Mechanics and Architecture.

6. Husbandry and American Improvements.

These *Committees* shall meet on their own adjournments, and at such other times as the Society shall appoint, for the consideration of any matters referred to them, and shall have power to chuse their own chairman. But no Committee, as such, shall take up any new business of the Society, but shall confine themselves only to the subjects for which they are appointed, and to matters referred to them by the Society.